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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0749
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0847
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0687
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0782
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0609
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0575
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DILI 000014

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS, DS/ICI/PF, DS/ICI/DR, INL/G/TIP
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [KPKO](#) [KCRM](#) [ASEC](#) [UN](#) [SY](#) [NI](#) [LE](#) [TT](#)

SUBJECT: SUSPECTED INTERNATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKERS DETAINED

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CLASSIFIED BY: Elizabeth S. Wharton, Political/Economic Officer,
U.S. Embassy Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: UNPOL has arrested a Nigerian and a Lebanese national in Dili suspected of involvement in an apparent attempt to traffic young Timorese women to Syria, possibly for prostitution. The Nigerian detainee, found in possession of a large number of fraudulent documents, is confirmed to be the same individual who submitted a fraudulent US passport to the Indonesian Embassy in September. The arrests follow a several month period in which dozens of young Timorese women were approached with offers of domestic jobs in Syria and some taken for HIV/AIDS tests. While there is an outstanding report of one woman already having traveled, the remaining women eventually elected to not pursue the offers. Nonetheless, the emergence of this case points to potential vulnerabilities to trafficking risks in East Timor, which up until now has been identified as primarily at risk as a destination country. End summary.

¶2. (C) UNPOL has for the last couple months been carrying out an investigation into allegations of an international human trafficking scheme operating in East Timor in which young Timorese women have been offered domestic jobs in Syria, but were likely to be instead forced into prostitution. Within the last couple weeks, UNPOL detained a Nigerian national believed to have been involved, as well as his partner, a middle aged Lebanese national. (The Lebanese man is likely the man known as Hatom and alternately identified as Malaysian or Syrian below.) Emboff recently spoke to the head of the national Vulnerable Persons Unit, Antonio Domingues who reported that the Nigerian national was arrested with multiple fraudulent identity documents. A UN situation report notes that these included South African and Mexican passports, a UN ID and a UN international driving permit. The situation report also reports a UNPOL raid on a guest house in Dili where the suspect had been staying, resulting in the seizure of 16 passports, computer materials, compact disks, and documents. UNPOL believes he made the fraudulent documents himself. The Lebanese national, arrested during this raid, was not carrying any false documents but is

being held on the basis of providing false statements. According to Domingues, they were recruiting young women for overseas work via the Lebanese national's NGO. UNPOL suspects that the women were to be forced into prostitution but currently has insufficient evidence of this so is focusing on supporting prosecutions based on fraud and false statements. Domingues is currently under instructions to go solely through Interpol to gather potential additional information on the suspects and was not able to provide names or other identifying information, although he noted that the Lebanese national was middle aged, probably in his 50s. Additionally, Domingues stated that he was not aware of any Timorese who had in fact gone to Syria.

13. (C) Domingues was able to confirm that the Nigerian in detention, who was arrested as Dexter Dibo but whose real name is not known to us, is the same man who presented a fraudulent US passport to the Indonesian Embassy in September. On September 20, 2006 the Immigration Attache at the Indonesian Embassy contacted Emboff regarding a suspicious US passport that had been submitted with an application for an Indonesian visa. The name on the passport was: Rondilli, Thomson Milo, DOB: 06 Oct 1974, passport no. 134507611. After obtaining the passport in question, we relayed a scan of the bio page to Conoffs in Jakarta who concluded that the passport was fraudulent. In addition to telltale signs on the bio page, a search of US passport records revealed that there was no passport issued under the name and passport number. Emboff in Dili then conveyed to the Indonesian Embassy that no such valid passport existed and that we would retain the fraudulent document. The Indonesian Embassy was requested to refer the individual to the US Embassy. He made one phone call to Emboff's mobile phone from an unidentified number that was quickly cut off, and then made no further attempts to contact us or to retrieve the fraudulent passport.

14. (SBU) Emboffs have also spoken to several young women who had been targeted for recruitment to jobs in Syria, as well as

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international journalists looking into the case. Several young women approached with offers of domestic jobs in Syria provided the following account. A Timorese individual known only as "Maun Juli" (maun means "elder brother" in the local Tetum language) approached the xefe aldeia (hamlet chief) in their Dili neighborhood and stated that he needed to recruit 30 women of about 18 years of age for overseas jobs. The xefe was reportedly suspicious and did not take any action. The same Timorese man then began approaching young women directly in the neighborhood. He claimed that he could offer good job opportunities in Syria as cleaners, housekeepers, and childcare providers at a good wage (\$100 / month - a relatively good wage in the Timorese context). He also stated that all necessary travel documentation and travel expenses would be covered. He then instructed them to "register" for this opportunity several days later at a nearby IDP camp located in the Dom Bosco Catholic Church compound. According the account of the young women, the Church officials running the camp did not allow him to operate this registration inside, so it occurred adjacent to the camp. A number of women did go to register and were told to attend another follow up meeting. Many of them did not attend the follow up meeting, apparently because their xefe aldeia was angry that they had gone to the initial registration. However, at least one woman from the neighborhood continued to pursue the "opportunity;" she reported to Emboffs that there were women from several other Dili neighborhoods who had been approached and were considering going.

15. (SBU) A priest at the Dom Bosco IDP camp relayed to an international journalist his interaction with the Timorese man who had been approaching the women. He reported his name as Julio da Silva Guterres, a former student at Dom Bosco who later worked on Timor Sea issues. The priest reported that Guterres appeared at the camp and wanted to put up an announcement regarding jobs in Syria. He told the priest he was working with a Syrian national and was looking for women from 19-30 years old and that they would need to provide photos. He presented

promotional materials including pictures of young Asian women supposedly happily working in Syria. When around 30 young women appeared several days later to "register," the priest reportedly became more concerned and asked for additional information and to speak to "the Syrian," but this follow up never occurred.

¶6. (SBU) Another young woman from another neighborhood reported to an Australian journalist that she was instructed to go to the Dili Guest House, a known prostitution establishment, for a follow up meeting where she says she met "the Syrian" and "the Nigerian" who was described as "big, with tattoos." She had no further information on the two individuals. This young woman, who ultimately decided against going, reported to an international journalist that she is certain that one Timorese woman had already gone. The woman in question was from Baucau, named Josepha da Costa, and went by the nickname "Wanda." She reportedly speaks good English. However, there is no clear corroboration of this to date.

¶7. (C) Later in October or in early November, an international identified as Hatom, who some of the young women have identified as "the Syrian," brought a group of 20 to 30 young women to the Bairopite Clinic, a well-known community clinic run by American Dr. Daniel Murphy. The clinic staff identified Hatom as possibly Malaysian and reported that he requested HIV/AIDS tests for the group. An international clinic staff member relayed to Emboff that the clinic was suspicious of the request, but played along, taking the blood samples and charging for the tests. They then reported the incident to the international police and never conducted the requested blood tests. Hatom claimed to be working with a "skills transfer" NGO and provided the following international number to clinic staff: +86 4 11 86924639.

¶8. (SBU) All the young women we spoke to ultimately decided not to pursue the jobs in Syria, although one was well along in the process before she opted out and others reportedly were close to departing. A number of factors led the women not to further pursue these jobs: a) The disapproval of community and Church leaders, while not determinative, raised doubts; b) Some of the young women with whom we spoke mentioned the job offers to

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internationals with whom they were acquainted who immediately relayed their concern; c) The Minister of Labor and Social Reinsertion reportedly found out about the recruitment efforts and endeavored to prevent any women from leaving. Immigration officials thereafter stopped approving passport applications for travel to Syria, although it is unclear how they would have identified women who did not name Syria as their destination.

¶9. (SBU) Comment: While this apparent trafficking attempt appears to have been nipped in the bud, it nonetheless points to worrying vulnerabilities. First, East Timor's extremely high unemployment rate and lack of opportunities makes the population susceptible to offers of overseas opportunities. Second, last year's crisis and the consequent ongoing instability further eroded opportunities and produced widespread pessimism about the nation's future, so an increasing number of young people are actively looking for overseas options. Third, the majority of Timorese lack access to good information sources across the board. Until this occurred, most of the young women approached were not familiar with the concept of trafficking or the risks involved in taking overseas jobs. Finally, it is likely that Timorese could be seen as attractive trafficking victims in light of their lack of overseas resources to call on once in a trafficking situation. This attempt indicates that Timor has appeared on the radar screen of international traffickers. At this point, this is the only known effort of its kind to recruit for such a scheme and it remains to be seen whether other attempts will follow. But the vulnerabilities noted above and this development strongly indicate that it is no longer accurate to categorize East Timor's TIP risks as purely related to being a destination country. Law enforcement and other anti-TIP efforts will clearly need to focus not only on preventing the expansion of internal trafficking and exploitation of trafficking victims from the region, but also on future

targeting by similar international efforts. End comment.
GRAY